

The seal of the Department of the Interior is circular. It features a bison standing in a field with mountains and a rising sun in the background. The words "DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR" are inscribed around the perimeter of the seal.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to AM's OF THURSDAY, MAY 2, 1946.

Production in the major United States fisheries during the first quarter of 1946 was appreciably less than during the same period last year, largely because of a decline in the large pilchard fishery of the Pacific coast and a decrease in landings at New England ports, the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, reported today.

Landings of pilchards or Pacific sardines between January 1 and the closing of the season on February 28 amounted to 43,787 tons, compared with 62,076 tons in 1945. Fishing for pilchards will be resumed in California, the center of the fishery, on August 1. Pilchards support the largest canned fish industry in the United States (exclusive of Alaska) and are also the chief source of fish meal and oil.

Quantities of fish landed at the major ports of New England have fallen from about 86,000,000 pounds during the first three months of 1945 to some 63,000,000 pounds this year. The heaviest decline - some 26,000,000 pounds - occurred at Boston, where the large trawlers have been tied up since the first of the year as a result of a labor disagreement. Landings at Gloucester are 4,000,000 pounds under last year's receipts, but a gain of about 4,000,000 pounds was reported at both New Bedford and Portland. Fishing activity on Cape Cod continued at about the same level as in the first quarter of 1945.

The catch of tuna during the first three months of 1946 totaled 22,909,700 pounds compared with 14,280,600 in 1945. The three-month total for Pacific mackerel was 4,388,461 pounds, declining from 5,789,422 pounds last year.

On the Gulf of Mexico, production of shrimp declined from 43,225 barrels during the first quarter of 1945 to 36,078 barrels this year, and oysters declined from 257,220 barrels to 180,691 barrels. Catches of hard crabs and of fresh and salt water fish showed little change compared with last year, totaling 1,076,050 and 1,646,540 pounds respectively.

Receipts of fish at most of the large consuming centers remained at approximately the level of 1945. New York's salt water market received slightly smaller shipments by truck and express but vessel landings increased, giving the market a total of 56,000,000 pounds, compared with 58,000,000 in 1945. Chicago received 17,600,000 pounds of fish, including domestic shipments and imports, or approximately the same as in 1945. Landings and local receipts of fish at Seattle totaled 6,255,000 pounds in 1946 and 5,187,000 in 1945.

Total holdings of frozen fish and shellfish as of April 1 totaled 83,640,530 pounds, compared with holdings of 39,829,575 pounds on the same date last year.